

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Karen Pedevilla 800.622.4845 ext. 452

**Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services Commission Believes Bill HR 3717 is Misguided**  
*Legislation proposed by Representative Tim Murphy will harm individuals with mental illness*

INDIANAPOLIS – On Dec. 12, 2013, the Representative for Pennsylvania's 18<sup>th</sup> congressional district, Tim Murphy, introduced the proposed bill "Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013" in the U.S. House of Representatives (HR 3717).

"Contrary to its positive sounding title, this bill will work against the interests of individuals with mental illness and their families," said Executive Director of Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services Commission (IPAS), Gary Richter.

IPAS is an independent state agency which protects and promotes the rights of individuals with disabilities.

"If HR 3717 becomes the law of the land, people with mental illness will be more vulnerable to discrimination in housing, employment and education. More barriers will be created, making it more difficult for individuals to receive the treatment they need," said Richter.

This bill would virtually eliminate a critical federally funded advocacy program, Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI), which serves hundreds of individuals with mental illness in Indiana each year.

In the PAIMI program's 30 year history, it has been highly successful in helping individuals with mental illness obtain the treatment services they need and ensuring freedom from abuse and neglect in psychiatric treatment facilities.

Hoosiers with mental illness and those who care about them need to know about this pending legislation.

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**Indiana Protection & Advocacy Services Commission**

IPAS is an independent state agency whose mission is, "To protect and promote the rights of individuals with disabilities, through empowerment and advocacy." IPAS was created in 1977 by state law (IC. 12-28-1-6 as amended) to protect and advocate the rights of people with disabilities and is Indiana's federally designated Protection and Advocacy system and client assistance program. It receives no state funding and is independent from all service providers, as required by federal and state law. IPAS is governed by a 13-member commission, which sets the agency's Priorities and is advised on mental illness matters by an advisory council.